



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 9, 2018

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Spend a winter day ice fishing

Ice fishing has a passionate following across Iowa. Get a group of friends and/or family together, bundle up and go ice fishing this winter.

Check the weekly DNR fishing report (www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Fishing-Reports) for ice conditions across the state before going out. Smaller bodies of water usually freeze faster and thicker than larger lakes or river backwaters, which often have a warmer current moving through.

At a minimum, four inches of clear blue ice is recommended for fishing. Be especially careful on ice around submerged trees and emergent vegetation, this ice tends to be weaker. If the ice does not look right, find a different spot.

“Most Iowa lakes are full of bluegills, which are the easiest and most often caught during the winter,” said Joe Larscheid, chief of fisheries for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

“Start with a number 8 hook or a tear drop and tip it with a waxworm. Drop the baited hook to the bottom of the lake, then lift it back up about a foot.

Lakes in northern Iowa will have yellow perch and walleye in addition to bluegills. In the south, crappies join bluegills. “You catch an occasional catfish, northern pike, largemouth bass, and other species, but not as consistently,” Larscheid said.

Use the DNR's online maps of the lake you are going to fish to find edges of creek channels, fish mounds, brush piles and rock piles that likely hold fish. Printable maps and the online Fishing Atlas are available on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/Fishing/Fishing-Maps.

“You can position yourself right over the habitat, place your bait and lure it front of the fish and can catch a lot of fish per trip,” said Larscheid.

Ice conditions change constantly and its thickness can vary across the lake. Drill test holes near shore and periodically as you move to measure the thickness and quality of the ice. Don't go out alone and always let someone else know where you will be and when you expect to return home.

New to ice fishing and need a little help to get started? Learn the basics at a free clinic scheduled across Iowa this winter. Check the DNR fishing calendar

at www.iowadnr.gov/fishing to find an ice fishing clinic near you.

Find more ice fishing tips on the DNR website at www.iowadnr.gov/icefishing.

Media Contact: Joe Larscheid, Chief of Fisheries, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-201-3376.

Trumpeter swan soiree returns to central Iowa

The public is invited to a Trumpeter Swan Soiree, celebrating North America's largest waterfowl species, at Walnut Woods State Park from 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m., on Jan. 27.

Programs will be given at the Walnut Woods State Park Lodge with concurrent outdoor viewing and interpretive presentations of trumpeter swans and bald eagles given by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Des Moines Parks and Rec, and Polk and Dallas County Conservation naturalists. Spotting scopes and binoculars will be provided.

An estimated 100 trumpeter swans are wintering at the Dale Maffitt Reservoir and surrounding area southwest of Des Moines, providing a rare opportunity to view good numbers of free flying trumpeter swans.

Hot chocolate, hot cider, cookies, hotdogs and other snacks will be provided free of charge. Donations will be accepted with proceeds going towards Iowa trumpeter swan restoration.

Jan. 27

Walnut Woods State Park Lodge, 3155 Walnut Woods Dr., West Des Moines

10:30-10:55 a.m. Trumpeter Swans- Bringing Back a North American Treasure

Margaret Smith, Director, Trumpeter Swan Society

11-11:25 a.m. Conservation funding for wetlands and water quality

Joe McGovern, President, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation

11:30-12 p.m. Live Trumpeter Swan Presentation- See, touch and learn about swans

Dave Hoffman, Iowa DNR

12:20-12:50 p.m. Trumpeter Swan Restoration in Iowa

Dave Hoffman, Iowa DNR, and Ron Andrews

12:55-1:25 p.m. "Return of the Trumpeter Swans" North American film
documentary preview

Steve Harryman, Filmmaker

1:30-2 p.m. Swans- Quality of Life

Holly Welch, Cancer Survivor

2 p.m. Guided field trip and Nature Photography 101, Swan and wildlife viewing with hands-on photo tips at Dale Maffitt Reservoir and southwest Des Moines

Eric Williamson and Holly Welch, Wildlife Photographers

10:30-2 p.m. Youth activities- Bills & Beaks- How birds eat, a swan touch kit, swan pine cone crafting

Anne Riordan, Iowa DNR

More information on Walnut Woods State Park can be found at: <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Places-to-Go/State-Parks-Rec-Areas/Iowas-State-Parks/ParkDetails/ParkID/610133>

Trumpeter swans were once common in Iowa, but were gone from the state by the late 1880s. By the early 1930s, only 69 trumpeter swans remained in the Lower 48 states. As the largest North American waterfowl, these magnificent all-white birds can weigh up to 32 pounds with an 8-foot wingspan. Public support is vital in restoring trumpeter swans to Iowa.

Walnut Woods State Park is on the southwest edge of Des Moines. From the intersection of I-35 and Hwy. 5; travel 1.5 miles east to SE 35th Street (exit 102), travel 1/4th mile north to Army Post road, 1/2 mile west to SW 105th Street, then 1.5 miles north and east on Walnut Woods Drive to Walnut Woods State Park.

This event is sponsored by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Polk and Dallas County Conservation Boards, Des Moines Water Works, Des Moines Parks and Recreation, Walnut Woods State Park, and the Trumpeter Swan Society.

For more information, contact David Hoffman, Trumpeter Swan Restoration Coordinator, Wildlife Bureau, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-425-0737 cell, 641-357-3517 office, or David.Hoffman@dnr.iowa.gov

Members sought for Brushy Creek board

Hikers, bikers and horseback riders interested in protecting, preserving and enhancing the trail system at Brushy Creek State Recreation Area are being encouraged to serve on the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Brushy Creek Trail Advisory Board.

The 10-member Trail Advisory Board is responsible for advising the DNR on issues and making recommendations regarding the development and maintenance of 40 miles of trails at Brushy Creek, a popular equestrian and multi-use recreation area in Webster County.

The DNR is looking for qualified applicants who actively participate in recreational trail activities, from hiking, bicycling and horseback riding to snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. There are two board positions open, each serving a three-year term and meeting twice annually.

For more information about the board or to download the application form, go to www.iowadnr.gov/bcreek. Deadline for applications is 4:30 p.m., Jan. 20, 2018.